



## Meg rides with royalty

By SIMON PINDER

**C**ONTRARY to popular belief, riding a horse for long distances does not always result in a sore backside.

For the right person like Margaret "Meg" Wade of Burrowye near Corowa, it has resulted in regular trips overseas rubbing shoulders with Arabian royalty.

She has just returned from the World Endurance Championships in the United Arab Emirates where she was the FEI choice as best overall rider.

Ever since Meg switched from marathon paddling to endurance riding over long distances she has left the competition in her wake.

Endurance races involve competitors riding their mounts over a set distance. Different weight divisions are contested.

Late last year the Albury-based rider became the first Australian to win two bronze medals at world championship endurance riding level.

She entered endurance riding competitions 11 years ago and has had outstanding success.

Before riding endurance events, Meg was an avid pony clubber, dabbled in showjumping under instruction from former Olympian John Fahey and also enjoyed dressage.

While she did not completely put horses out of her life before endurance riding she tried cross country skiing and contested 70km and 80km events in Italy and Germany.

Meg also completed the Murray River marathon canoe race three times.

One day 11-years ago Meg learned about a 160km endurance ride called the Colo Challenge near Windsor in NSW. She looked and was hooked.

"As soon as I started I was reasonably successful," Meg said.

"Having done marathon sports taught me how to pace myself."

Meg won a bronze with the Australian team that contested the FEI world endurance championships at The Hague in 1994.

She has just returned with her latest team bronze from the world endurance championships in the United Arab Emirates where she rode 160km through rolling desert in 28-degree temperatures.

The UAE's royal family are avid endurance riding competitors as well as being the owners and breeders of the largest Thoroughbred stables in the world.

Crown Prince of Dubai, Sheik Mohammed Bin Rashid al Maktoum, employs Meg as a



**Thirsty work:** Meg Wade (left) with her back-up team in the World Endurance Championships, Tova Ducker and Mark Johnson and her mount, Tooheys Red.

consultant and trainer for his endurance team, which includes his three sons.

Meg, 37, was named the Australian Endurance Rider Association's 1998 rider of the year. Last year Meg won the team section of the Tom Quilty Gold Cup competition with a

private entry which was the first time the feat had been achieved.

She also won many other NSW rides last year and came fifth in the Victorian endurance riders' championship.

"I have done 2600km of competition in Australia in 1998," Meg said.

While Meg can monitor her fitness she said it was a matter of correct feeding and constant training that kept her mounts fit for rides.

"It is a race but it is run under very strict veterinary control and every 20 to 40 kilometres there are vet checks."

### Events

#### JANUARY

18-21

**Narre Warren North:** Charlie Moffat Combined Training Clinic (03) 9796-8415 or 9796-8513

23-24

**Tonimbac:** Tonimbac Equestrian Centre, evening clinic with Amanda Ross, pony club level 4-1, ARC 4-1, 04 1739-0636, (03) 5977-8920.

24

**Wodonga:** 3rd Australian National Morgan Show, Wodonga Exhibition centre. (02) 6027-1307, (03) 5391-8242.

23-24

**Dinner Plain:** Australian Mountain Racing Association (03) 5828-4334.

**Garfield, West Gipps:** QHA "AA" spectacular show, (03) 5942-8493.

23,24,25

**Oaklands Junction:** Parelli natural horsemanship clinic (03) 5381-1797.

24

**Kinglake:** One day introductory ride, Melbourne Trail Horse Riding Club, (03) 9877-2444, (019) 195-825.

26

**Bullengarook Horse Show:** hacks galloways, ponies (3 rings), pony club, novelties, freshmans jumping & unofficial dressage. (03) 5428-9360.

**Oaklands Junction/Tullamarine:** Parelli lessons with Dave Stuart. 5387-1552 (AH).

30-31

**Traralgon Draft:** Gippsland Campdraft Association, (03) 5174-4032.

FEBRUARY